

the george brown college of applied arts and technology

Careers with a difference

George Brown caters to men and women

In a society where unisex is the norm among younger people, an educational institution must be prepared to cater to the vagaries of role reversal.

Today's young people, indeed potential students of all ages, aren't prepared to sacrifice a learning experience merely because tradition has labelled it male or female.

At George Brown males are enrolled in such traditionally-female courses as stenography while females take everything from printing technology to welding.



Julie Wood

Julie Wood, a second semester student in the Construction Technician program, is here because she's always been interested in the restoration of old Canadian buildings. Her goal is to work for the Toronto Historical Board and she thinks a basic knowledge of construction is essential to the position. The program is "a stepping off point".

The only female in a class of 14 men, Julie has no complaints about her fellow students.

"When I first walked in I felt weird," she says, "but now I am one of the class. They're used to me and I'm used to them."

"I knew I'd be bored to death in an arts program," says Julie who's a former Holt Renfrew employee and a graduate of Branksome Hall.

Her mechanical installations instructor, Gar Rowsome, says she relates well to her fellow students.

He says that as a general rule he finds females have a good practical approach to the construction program and are dependable.



Tom Vale

take the court stenographer's course he has to have a shorthand speed of 120 words a minute. Later he may be accepted by the Supreme Court as an apprentice.

Currently he has five periods of shorthand a day and does an average of three hours homework.

Tom's previous work experience is in the secretarial-clerical line. At one point he worked as a doctor's secretary. He chose a career in court reporting because it is "wide open as far as money is concerned." Also court hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the Supreme Court closes for the summer.

Beverley McCallum, a recent graduate of George Brown's Tractor Trailer Driver and Straight Truck Driver programs, has no complaints about her male co-workers at Canadian National.

Beverley is qualified to drive anything from a van to a tandem diesel truck.

She got hooked on truck driving after her husband Mike taught her to drive the straight truck. He also took the Tractor Trailer program at George Brown and now works for Canada Cartage.

Beverley, who worked as a stenographer in an office for five years, says she will never go back. She and her husband hope to work as a team and travel coast to coast with their own truck.

She likes the driving and the exercise and incidentally "doesn't mind" the good salary.

Subject supervisor Harry Fox says a female truck driver shouldn't have any trouble unless she has to do heavy loading. He says women make "excellent students" who can drive any vehicle.

Many take the course because their husbands are brokers and they want their wives to go along as spare drivers, he says.

Like women, men often find prejudice when considering a non-traditional role. Yet according to Heidi Yamashita, director of the College's Nightingale nursing campus, there has been a change in attitude towards male nursing students.

Nursing is a profession for anyone who has an interest in caring for people, Heidi says. "It's motivation that makes a student an outstanding nurse; it is the kind of person he is, not his sex."

Ray Shorten is a case in point. A third semester student at Nightingale, he wants to get some practical, basic medical training and experience before returning to his native Africa.

He holds a degree in psychology and English from the University of Western Ontario and does part-time work as a psychiatric assistant at the Clark Institute.

According to Ray, his sex is not detrimental to his studies. "At first you feel strange," he said, "but you soon get used to it." He and his fellow male students wear white pants and a tunic and have exactly the same training as the girls.

Although a male student may occasionally be asked by a classmate to handle an irrational or heavy patient, he has to guard against being taken for granted.

"You could find yourself doing orderly work. You have to make sure your role as staff nurse is clear."

Although Ray's future may or may not include nursing, he feels he is not losing anything by taking the course. His father was trained as a male nurse in the army and became the only medical practitioner in Angola. His brother is in the first year of a nursing program in London.

Like Ray, Vidya Budhrum plans to return home to help her countrymen. In the fourth semester of the Civil Engineering Technician program, she hopes to work for a year before enrolling in a four-year civil engineering program at university.

Engineering is a family affair with the Budhrums. Encouraged by her builder father and two brothers who are engineers, Vidya came to Canada to study North American civil

engineering techniques. When she completes her education she will return to her native Guyana.

Vidya says she is surprised by the reaction of Canadians to her choice of profession. In Guyana she said, it isn't unusual for a woman to work in a technical field.

Stephanic Hymas also was encouraged by her father to take a not-so-common course. Because she likes to work outside, she set aside her stenography training and enrolled in George Brown's Survey Technology program. Ultimately she hopes to be an "instrument man" for a construction or legal surveying company.



Rose Brown

Rose Brown decided to take the Graphic Arts Printing Technician program because she wanted "something practical in terms of getting a job."

"At the beginning the guys sort of took over. They wanted to help but ended up doing my work. Eventually it evened out and now I have their respect which means a lot to me."

With courses ranging from camera work and typesetting to offset and letterpress printing she should be well qualified to find employment. But although she gets along well with her classmates, she says she thinks there will be some discrimination if she tries to get a job operating a press. It's hard, dirty work which some employers might not give to a woman.

Rose came from Ottawa specifically to take the Printing Technician program at George Brown and she's enthusiastic about her first year.

"The teachers have been in the trade for years," she says, "and can offer you both technical know-how and a first-hand impression of what it's like in the working world."

Six other females are enrolled in the same program. "It's exciting that women are getting into different fields," she says.

Mike Alders is enrolled in the Day Care Worker program. He says that during field placement some people are bothered by his sex but that the children are oblivious. The main problem, he says, is with the washroom facilities which are geared for females.

Mike has very definite ideas on the role of the day care worker. "Each child is different," he says, "and you have to take your cues from the child."

His goal is to rent a big house and use part of it for day care. Ideally his students would be two to five-year-olds because it is possible to do most with this age group — field trips, etc. Music, puppets and drawing all are important aspects of a child's early education, according to Mike.

"All I have to do is provide a few basics like a danger-free environment, food and a place to sleep."

Eleanor Pratt chose the 10-month Welding-Fitting program because factory work was neither lucrative nor stimulating. Having worked in a small shop where there was some soldering done, she decided to try her hand at welding.

In order to take the course she has to commute daily from



Eleanor Pratt

Barrie and does homework during the four hours she spends on the bus.

When Eleanor finishes the program at the end of March she hopes to find a job with a small fabricating shop. Already the Manpower office in Barrie has three positions lined up.

It seems that most of the students enrolled in courses, usually not ascribed to their sex, have an inner drive sometimes lacking in their classmates. They are not taking a particular course because it's the 'in' thing to do nor for lack of a better choice. They want to take that program. It is a conscious and well thought out decision.

Meatcutting takes muscle

Leslie Foster is about 40. She was an auto-body worker in an auto-collision shop until she developed allergies to dust and had to start looking for another career.

Now she's taking Retail Meat Cutting at George Brown and is standing at the top of the class. She hopes to start a job with Olliffe Purveyors, a new gourmet shop in the Yonge/St. Clair area this month.

Leslie has grade 10 high school education.

"I can't survive on the wages offered by conventional jobs for women with my education," she says.

That's one of the reasons I got into auto-body work and, now, into meat-cutting. Meat cutters' salaries start at about \$165 a week and rise quickly with experience, she says. Union shops start at about \$256 a week.

It's heavy work. But with practice you develop wrist muscles, says Leslie. She also makes a point of moving the 100 to 120-lb. beef quarters herself during class — not much heavier work than nurses



Leslie Foster

lifting patients, she says.

Subject supervisor Jim Coole says that in chain store operations such as Dominion's, meat cutters are expected to move much heavier cuts of meat.

This is one area of the business in which women may run into job discrimination, he says. On the other hand Leslie's age and maturity are probably an advantage, especially in gourmet and private shops. She's enthusiastic and a hard worker, he says.

Woman sculptor studies welding

Sculptor Karena Massengill, 23, is taking the 10-month Manpower Welder Fitter course at George Brown to improve her skills as an artist, and get a well-paying job.

The only woman now in the course, she says she gets tired of reaction from her male counterparts, but, "I need these skills, this knowledge.

"I'm still very much a woman," she says.

Karena immigrated to Canada from the United States a year and a half ago. She subsequently worked as a resident sculptor and teacher at Harbourfront and as a teacher in Etobicoke and at Georges Vanier high school in North York.

She was commissioned this fall to execute an outdoor sculpture called "Thinking Faces", in cast bronze and steel, for Blacksmith Public School in North York.

While working to become a certified welder at George Brown, she still maintains a studio and executes private commissions.

Karena has shown her work in a wide variety of art exhibitions in the United States. She also took her art training there at the Men-

docino Art Center; California College of Arts and Crafts; University of California at Santa Cruz (all in California); and Temple University — Tyler School of Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

She has just been offered a position with a welding equipment manufacturer and distributor as a demonstrator.

Bank worker studies stationary engineering

You wouldn't usually expect an accountant to be taking stationary engineering at night school.

But Phyllis MacDougall, an accountant for seven years with the Bayview-Millwood branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, is doing just that. One evening a week she attends a stationary engineering course at George Brown College which she expects to finish in about a year and a half. The only woman in the class, she studies chemistry, sketching, electricity, refrigeration, combustion engines, heating and ventilating. She hopes to use her knowledge of stationary engineering after graduation in continued studies, possibly property management.

Phyllis, who is 28, became interested in the course after her husband, a second class stationary engineer with Imperial Oil, urged his staff to take a similar course.

So far she is enjoying it and finds the course relaxing. "It's a change from what I do every day," she says. "Therefore, I don't find it difficult."

Who says it's a man's world?

Residents of Yellowknife, capital of the Northwest Territories, rely heavily on their major source of heat, the oil burner.

Judith Reid, a 22-year-old student from Yellowknife, eventually hopes to own an oil burner servicing business. With this in mind she has enrolled in the Oil Burner Servicing program at George Brown. A five-month Manpower retraining course, it includes such subjects as heating systems, load calculation and the mechanics of the oil burner. She's the only female in the program and finds the workload heavy. But she says she's enjoying it.

Judith heard of the course through the Department of Education after completing a course in settlement maintenance at Fort Smith, Northwest Territories. The four-month program involved repair work and five trades including oil burner servicing.

She says her interest in oil burner servicing peaked after she woke up freezing seven times in two months because her oil burner had broken down. The final blow came when she returned from work to find her trailer home and all her possessions frozen solid. Damage was so extensive she had to move out.

Judith hopes to work for herself as soon as possible. She needs a van, tools, a stock of parts, a business licence and an office. She estimates it'll cost about \$2,000, not including the van, to start up.

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Twenty-three-year-old Barbara Pratt isn't interested in stereotyped female jobs.

She finds physical labor more challenging, and recently spent a year out west working at part-time jobs such as tapping beer, working at a lumber mill and



Barbara Pratt, Electronics



Judith Reid, Oil Burner Servicing

sorting raw fur pelts.

Now she's enrolled in the first year of George Brown College's Electronics Program. Her experience flying small planes — she has her private pilot's licence — has prompted her to take the acoustics option next year. The noise level in small aircraft, she says, is a problem and deafness a very real threat. She hopes through acoustics training to be able to explore

possible solutions.

Barbara says she's enjoying the technical aspect of the electronics program despite the fact that she was arts-oriented at high school and took a year of training at the Ontario College of Art.

She's the only female in the program but says she's "only conscious of being a woman if I'm reminded . . . it really is a relaxed situation."

These women chose construction and drafting

In a working situation fellow employees care about how the job is done, not whether you are male or female.

At least that's the experience of mechanical drafting graduate Wendy McKenzie.

Wendy, who works in the maintenance department of Sidbec-Dosco Ltd., is the only female among 40 employees. The company manufactures finished wire, nails and weld mesh.

Wendy does design work and drafting for the maintenance and project engineering departments. She's concerned mainly with machinery parts and piping. To modify or standardize machinery parts she takes old drawings and works with the machine operator, foreman and engineer. Then she prepares a detail drawing.

Wendy said she was self-conscious when she first joined the company but soon realized that in a working situation only the "bored ones" worry about your sex. You know where you stand, she added, with the people who count.

Wendy has found her job easier than school. Adult men, she said, are a lot different to work with. They treat you as an equal. The salary for her job is in the \$10,000 a year range.

After completing Grade 10 at Alma College in St. Thomas, Wendy worked as a receptionist in an office and as a drug-store manager. She felt this last position was a dead end and her husband convinced her to follow her interests and enroll in the one-year mechanical drafting course at George Brown.

The course, she said, has given her more self confidence. Evaluating her position after two years with Sidbec-Dosco, Wendy says she received sound training at the College. Her only suggestion is the addition of electrical drafting to the curriculum.

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Julia Wood, 22, stole the show at fall convocation.

Not only was she the first person in the college's history to graduate simultaneously from two post-secondary pro-

grams, but she also passed both programs, Construction Technician and Drafting Technician, with honors.

Ms. Wood is now working for F.W. Woodcock & Associates in Toronto as a building technician. Her job for the project management company includes architectural drafting, construction quantity surveying, cost control and contracts administration. She is formerly a Holt Renfrew employee and graduate of Branksome Hall.

A family affair

Three members of one family have taken or are taking courses at George Brown.

Erika Von Berner, a recent real estate graduate, is now employed with Sunflower Real Estate. Her son Alex, 10, is in the Junior Gourmet Cooking course. He is renowned for his banana soup.

Mrs. Von Berner's daughter, Irene Swetlowski, is taking a one-year Architectural Drafting course. A former bank teller, she finds drafting more suited to her temperament.

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Karena Massengill